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WEDNESDAY, JUNE 10, 2009

In Today's Papers

The EU Renews Calls for Turkey to Carry Out Reforms
Zaman, Hurriyet, Radikal, Milliyet, Yeni Safak: The European Commission's Enlargement Commissioner Olli Rehn spoke to a group of Turkish journalists in Brussels regarding the EU's expectations for Turkey in 2009. Liberal-intellectual Radikal reports that Olli Rehn said that Turkey "should not concentrate only on the Cyprus issue" and that "democratic reforms were an important part of the EU process." Islamist-oriented Zaman reports that Olli Rehn clearly stated that the EU "expects Ankara to carry out constitutional reforms concerning party closures by the end of 2009." Zaman quotes Rehn as saying "We want some concrete steps to be taken in the field of fundamental freedoms. We expect such steps to pave the way for the strengthening of the freedom of press, freedom of expression and freedom of religion. The amendments on the Foundations Law are significant, but are not sufficient. Having the Labor Law adopted by the Parliament at once has importance. Additionally, constitutional reforms concerning political party closures, in line with the Venice Criteria should be carried out by the end of the year." Ruling out assumptions that Turkey has had lost its reformist spirit, Rehn noted that 10 out of 35 chapters have been opened since 2005 and despite all the crises Turkey has experienced since 2005 and despite the tensions between Turkey and the EU, this is a good result.

Editorial Commentary on EU-Turkey

Mehmet Ali Birand wrote in tabloid Posta: "The European Union is urging Turkey to take tangible steps on the reform process. The EU Commissioner Olli Rehn especially drew attention that nothing had changed from their point of view, no matter what France and Germany say, by stating, 'our target is to realize Turkey's full membership in the European Union.' That means the idea of 'privileged partnership' as put forth by France and Germany has not yet reached the EU Commission. The Commission does not attach any importance to these calls. The only expectation is that Ankara will keep its promises by re-starting the reform process, accelerating steps toward a solution in Cyprus, finding a formula to reopen the Halki seminary, and overcoming limitations against the freedom of thought

and the freedom of the press."

Abdulhamit Bilici wrote in Islamist oriented Zaman: "Even the pro-Turkey figures at European Parliament express disappointment about the slow down in the reform process. Turkey's accession to the EU will certainly be not as easy as the process was for Croatia or Slovenia. Turkey should be able to accept this as a fact and move forward on the reform process, which is important both domestically and internationally."

Erdal Safak wrote in mainstream Sabah: "There is a clear and strong message from the EU that Turkey has to focus on reforms rather than harping on disappointment with the EP's more conservative composition. The EU is still hopeful about good prospects regardless of these. EU officials and Turkish officials in Brussels agree that tangible steps before the end of 2009, such as reopening the Halki Seminary, will be very helpful to ease potential problems such as permission to allow Greek Cypriot ships to use Turkish ports."

Ali Bayramoglu wrote in Islamist oriented Yeni Safak: "The best answer to the growing anti-Turkey platform in the newly composed European Parliament is for Turkey to accomplish tangible reforms. After all, these reforms are for the good of the Turkish people and for uplifting the standards of Turkish democracy."

Karabakh Summit to be Held in Moscow Without Turkey
Islamist oriented Yeni Safak reports that members of Minsk Group are planning to hold a "mini summit" on the Karabakh issue in Moscow next month.

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President Obama will go to Moscow on July 6 and French President Sarkozy will also be in the region at that time so Obama, Sarkozy and Russian President Medvedev will hold talks with Armenian President Sargsian and Azerbaijani President Aliyev in Moscow. The leaders are expected to focus on problems in Nagorno Karabakh, energy issues and developments in the Caucasus. The paper notes that Turkey is not invited to the summit. Normally, says Yeni Safak, the members of the Minsk Group include the U.S., Russia, Turkey, France, Germany, Belarus, Italy, Portugal, Holland, Sweden, Finland, Armenia, and Azerbaijan. However, the paper says that this meeting will only include the U.S., France, Russia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan.

Foreign Minister Davutoglu Urges The International Community to Boost Support for Pakistan

Sabah, Radikal, Zaman: Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu on Tuesday urged the international community to support troubled Pakistan. Davutoglu presented Pakistani Prime Minister Gilani with a \$10 million check for humanitarian aid. Following his meeting with the Prime Minister, Davutoglu held contacts with the Land Forces Commander General Kayani and with the Parliament Speaker Fehmida Mirza. Davutoglu noted that the Turkish Embassy in Islamabad would shortly become the NATO contact point in Pakistan, operating as a channel for disseminating information and facilitating NATO programs while stressing the importance of improving bilateral relations within the framework of an action plan.

European Court Fines Turkey for Failing to Protect Woman from Domestic Violence

All papers report that The European Court of Human Rights delivered a historic decision by fining Turkey 36,500 Euros for discriminatory judicial passivity in a domestic violence case, which the court ruled "created a climate in Turkey that was conducive to domestic violence." Mainstream Hurriyet says this is the first time a state is convicted for failing to prevent domestic violence. In 2002 Nahide Opuz applied to the European Court to file a complaint against Turkish authorities who failed to protect her from her abusive husband. This husband was released from prison even though he was serving a lifetime prison sentence for murdering Opuz's mother in 2002. The ECHR ruled that the Turkish state had violated three articles prohibiting torture and discrimination, and ensuring the right to life of the victim.

Guantanamo Prisoner Transferred to U.S. for Trial

Media are united in their interpretation that the success of the prosecution of Ahmed Ghailani in a New York civil court is a key test for President Obama's plans to close Guantanamo.

Islamist-oriented Zaman reports "This transfer is an important test for Obama's plan to close Guantanamo and try some of the suspects in the U.S." Mainstream Sabah headlines, "A Revolution in Gitmo: The First Civil Prosecution Proceeds," and the paper reports, "Geylani faces 238 separate charges related to the 1998 bombings of the U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania," which "killed 12 Americans and 224 Kenyans and Tanzanians," and Geylani has "remained in U.S. custody since he was apprehended in Pakistan in 2004." Mainstream Haberturk reports "the first detainee (from Guantanamo) is brought to the U.S." which constitutes, "an important development in Obama's plan to close Guantanamo."

George Mitchell Embarks on Tour for Mideast Peace

Media highlight President Obama's phone conversation with Israeli PM Netanyahu ahead of George Mitchell's visit to the region and Netanyahu's expected speech next week. Leftist Taraf headlines, "The U.S. is Determined on Middle East Peace," and the paper notes "prior to Israeli PM Netanyahu's speech on a new approach to peace and security in the region, Obama talked on the phone with him," and "in a separate development, Special Envoy George Mitchell is travelling to Israel to discuss Jewish settlements and peace talks with Palestinians," and the paper notes some predict, "The U.S. could solve the crisis within two years." Liberal Radikal reports,

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"Special Envoy George Mitchell began a tour of the Middle East yesterday with a visit to Israel, where he will begin to present Obama's plan for peace between Israel and Palestine." In "A Two-State Solution Plan from The U.S.," leftist-nationalist Cumhuriyet reports "Mitchell has begun his tour of the Middle East in order to recharge peace talks between Israel and Palestine." Mainstream Sabah highlights that "despite the differing views between the U.S. and Israel regarding peace talks with Palestinians and settlements in the West Bank," Mitchell praised Israel as "Our close ally."

Elections in Iran - "It's Not An Election, It's a Revolution."
(Hurriyet)

Media note the campaigns are heating up ahead of Friday's presidential elections in Iran. In "A Human Chain in Tehran for Musavi," liberal Radikal reports, "The campaigns are getting fierce ahead of Friday's elections," as "a giant crowd of Ahmadinejad supporters gathered in a stadium for a campaign rally, so supporters of Musevi used Facebook and SMS to organize a long human chain along Baghdad street." Mainstream HaberTurk reports in "Election Crowds in Tehran," that "Supporters of both Ahmadinejad and Musavi filled the streets of Tehran to the point that Ahmadinejad was unable to reach a rally with 50,000 participants." Mainstream Milliyet reports, "The Differences in The Meetings Are Obvious," as "women at Ahmadinejad's meetings are covered from head to toe," and "Musavi's meetings take place in a party-like atmosphere, where youth dance and women are free to dress chicly."

TV News (CNN Turk)

Domestic

Diyarbakir Governor sets up a call center offering service in Kurdish and Zaza language.

Bitlis Education Directorate initiates investigation against labor union activist Kemal Gultekin who referred to the "AK party" as "AKP."

The Ankara prosecutor has asked the Justice Ministry to annul a ruling of Sincan criminal court giving the green light to the trial of President Gul in connection with missing funds of the now closed Welfare Party.

Iraqi President Talabani invited CHP leader Deniz Baykal to Baghdad.

RTUK Chairman Akman announced he would not resign over allegations

of his connections to the German-based corruption scandal related to the Deniz Feneri organization. Akman will complete his term as RTUK Chairman on July 14th.

World

Search crews have recovered 28 bodies of passengers on the Air France Flight that crashed in the Atlantic Ocean eight days ago

An Indian military plane with 12 personnel on board is reported missing along India's borders with China.

The FBI plans to continue using informants to monitor mosques in the U.S.

The US Army says it holds around 11,000 prisoners in Iraq.

JEFFREY